pagodas and those throughout the country are descendants of the pagoda slaves.

Beggars are rated below the pagoda slaves - but, because of the Buddhist merit associated with giving do well for themselves. The beggars live in communities on the outskirts of the town often in cemetaries. They are thought to exhume the dead to get the coins placed in the mouth of the deceased to ensure expenses on his journey to heaven. The wood of the coffin is believed to be used in constructing their huts. Professional undertakers or morticians are regarded with horror since they like the beggars, make their living from the dead. The functions of burial are performed gratis by the entire village. A story is currently going round the University dormitories telling of an immensely wealthy Burmese coffin maker in Rangoon who has offered riches to the young man who will marry his beautiful daughter. When the future seems blank the students' friend advises "Hay, why don't you go and marry the coffin maker's daughter?" It seems that the money would scarcely compensate for the social discrimation. The extent to which the occupation classes are rigid in marriage and other social exchanges is an interesting problem.

A young man is obliged to remain within the occupation class of his family or to rise to greater heights. He is advised at an early age to "be simple, aim high, and tell the truth." When children play at dacoits (thieves) or other "low class" games their parents object to their low aspirations and advise them to play nobles and ministers. One would feel justified in remaining idle rather than accept a position below that of his birth. It is better to accept a clerks job at a low salary than an artisans at a high salary. On the other hand those born into lower status occupation groups tend to be satisfied with their state as a condition of birth. In Rangoon, however, even the hawkers may have ambitions to achieve fame and fortune. The opportunities for social mobility is greater in the towns and cities but difinitely restricted in the villages.

Apprenticeship to trades begins at the age of 12 to 14 years, and usually lasts for several years. Ordinarily the youth is attached to the shop of a relative where he lives and is payed a subsistence wage while learning. The key to high positions lies in education in

461
555
873
602
[538]

The key to high positions lies in education in the high schools and Universities. Family support is necessary for this and the student is constantly aware of his obligation to succeed for their benefit. "One tree can support a thousand birds" illustrate the dependency of the relatives on the successful individual.

555
777
152
602

In order to succeed one needs each of these three qualities: KAMMA (fate or luck), NYAN (intelligence), and WIRIYA(industriousness The failure of any one can cause the lack of success. Ordinarily, however, KAMMA is blamed in cases of failure - and the other two credited for success. The concept of KAMMA includes merit and demerit compiled in all previous existences. Because of this convenient excuse the true causes of failure are seldom analysed by the individual and he does not have a sense of personal blame or shame. Also social condemnation does not fall heavily on the unsuccessful who has tried and failed. However, one should finish what he starts or not attempt it, "once you start climbing the pole you must reach the top". The individual may not achieve fame or fortune but he is expected to maintain his birth position. His relatives, who suffer shame if he does not, help him. A major contribution of the individual is an advantageous marriage within or above his occupational group.

[583]

556
554
461

What does one strive for, by work, in the Burmese society? Not subsistence, for food is ordinarily cheap and easily attained in the villages. Clothing, shelter and the other necessities of life are also not the objective. The subsistence pattern is simple and essentially homogeneous throughout the village.

554
301
461

The ordinary head of a household thinks of three major benefits to be gained from wealth. The first and most immediate are jewels to adorn the women of the family. The status of the family is reflected in public by the bangles, necklaces and earrings worn by the ladies. Diamonds are most prized and the size is important. However, most important is that each female be provided with "a set" of jewelry. The wife of the middle and upper status group particularly will prod the husband until he provides these necessities. The woman's clothing and also the husbands and his son's must also be the finest they can afford.

461
554
454
888

The second urge for wealth arises out of the desire for old age security. Hence gold coins are saved (hidden) against the day when

621
722 structure of the social and political organization is the same in both places. However, the expectations and obligations of the original village are ill defined perhaps for the reason that the camp families no longer depend so completely on each other for their social and ceremonial activities. In Pathwe, U Myaing and his family were responsible citizens of the village as a whole. In camp, they are merely temporary residents with only the most rudimentary of obligations to their fellow refugees. The basic functions of the camp are carried out by semi-official persons. There is a minimum of feeling of solidarity in the camp where the immediate family is the major functioning unit.

Much has been lost with the passing of the communal activities of the small village. Yet the basic social and ceremonial activities
[181] are still carried out in Rangoon. The community has become a large, impersonal one but the values are the same. The activities, as at the gigantic Shwe Dagon pagoda, duplicate those of the village on a grand scale and are hence more stimulating - but the family is no longer in a special status position and are nameless and unknown in their activities. Because of lack of money the activities are greatly curtailed in scope, but also the obligation is less. In this sense the family is "freed" from pressing obligations of the village where, for example, they were expected to contribute relatively large sums to community activities.

621
722
369
517 The familiar and beloved flavour of routine village activities is replaced by the excitment of life in the big town. Everything is new and different and while the basic understandings are still encountered the old restrictions of the small community have disappeared. Life in Rangoon is full of possibilities and amusement.

369
●555
[1465] Recently (during the summer of 1951) U Myaing was promoted from street cleaner to boss of the cleaners of one section. He still gets a salary of Rs. 86/- a month but has the position of an overseer somewhat equivalent in status to the IN overseer's job in Pathwe. There
000 are many opportunities for an honest and intelligent person to rise in Rangoon. In October 1951 U Myaing visited me to take an order for table mats. His samples were much too large and bound with a violent

gives important data on the process of urbanizing villagers - the country people are an important group in the growth of the Burmese section of Rangoon; probably a large section of the present refugee population will stay in the future. 183 369 [178]

The concepts of pattern of living and standard of living: The Burmese pattern of living, or any culture pattern, is a universe of beliefs and practices manifested in acts and artifacts. The analogy of the "Universe" is a useful one in that it recognizes a guiding body of understandings that controls the whole of the society (like "laws" of Universe) while emphasizing the particular understandings that govern the various groups or classes of the society (like the "laws" of the Solar and other systems within the Universe). The "solar systems" are the standard levels of operations forming a comprehensive set of forces within itself. Families, like U Myaing's have a mobility, in the case understudy a forced change, which takes them out of one standard system into another. The adjustments which they undergo reflects the "laws" which control the various standard levels as well as the basic concepts controlling the whole of the society. 121 183

Each belief and practice has a range of expressions which can be defined. The particular expression practiced by a family is the standard or level of a phenomenon capable of expansion or contraction within prescribed limits. The ultimate limits are defined by the total range of expressions for the culture as a whole. But the practical limits for a family are defined by the possibilities of the society segment (community) in which they find themselves. Thus, the range of U Myaing's possibilities of expression are much greater in Rangoon than they were in Pathwe and greatly exceed his original ideas of what was possible. He may, for example, become a highly westernized political leader - although this seems unlikely in terms of his expectations. The westernized, urban spheres of Burmese culture is now opened to the family. [621] [369] [177]

U Myaing is motivated by the basic expectations of the Burmese culture at a level applicable to his situation in terms of the possibilities of his social environment. In Pathwe, he was a fisherman and aspired to those things that fishermen should. In camp, he was at 181 565 555

181
565
●555 first a bewildered refugee, but gradually assumed the role of a labourer rising in the ranks. The case indicates the mobility of the Burmese family and shows clearly that it may function successfully outside of the confines of its original social atmosphere.

182
594
621
156 The family in Burmese society: The successful mobility of U Myaing's family indicate that the immediate family is the primary social unit of Burmese society. The Burmese community is then a congregation of immediate families who engage in activities of mutual benefit within the protective framework of the village structure. This interpretation high lights a particular type of individualism which is a family individualism depending on the roles of each [779] member of the family for its full expression. This concept seems tied to the Buddhist idea of individual salvation through acts of merit on the one hand and the exigencies of gaining a livelihood on the other. [474] The family is the basic economic unit and though it will enter cooperative endeavours (like the IN fisheries, or communal net propitiations), has the ultimate responsibility and capabilities of supporting itself. [596] The extended family is important, as indeed is the total village social structure, only in so far as it contributes to the maintenance of the individual immediate family of procreation including spouses, offspring and aged parents. The "looseness" of the social structure conversely allows mobility of the immediate families. This analysis indicates that attempts at modernizing of the Burmese people (acculturation) should meet with a minimum of structural obstacles - such as caste, clan and rigid associations might present.

181
156
369
555 The Burmese culture pattern and the individual: The village culture pattern is dominated by a series of relatively simple, interrelated ideas held by all. Each individual feels himself temporily occupying a particular situation which is only one of many existences and but an instant in eternity. He is fated to be a member of a particular family with a set of opportunities through life. Life should be pleasant and must be virtuous if future existences are to be pleasant. He must realise as fully as possible the talents and opportunities that come to him through his KARMA situation. In the villages this concept is a great stabilizing force and tends to make an individual content with

his lot. It also tends toward a kind of stratification of society where the boundaries, however, are neither sharp nor fast. Each person is comfortably installed in his place and competes, mildly, only with those of his own level. The obligations (as contributions for ceremonies) are in terms of one's ability, and his status is in terms of his virtues. Status is closely correlated with increasing age. This concept motivate the Burmese in the village within "KARMA groups". 181 156 364 555 [561] [554]

The unusual individual may transcend his family positions in exceptional cases - by marriage or achievement. Achievement by physical force has been a means of mobility in the past - there is the tradition of the strong man leader who comes from humble origins. Mobility by entrepreneur achievement (rice mill owners, traders) has been greatly stimulated with increased western contacts. U Myaing was a sort of entrepreneur in Pathwe. In Rangoon the opportunities are great and some Burmese are successfully embracing this, as yet, somewhat unfamiliar course. The western entrepreneur concept appears to be finding a fertile ground in the traditional "group individualism" of the Burmese. 156 555 557 [177]

The standards or levels of culture: When U Myaing's standard of living plummeted downwards as a refugee he became discontented and unhappy desiring to return to the "plateau" of his former level. At first he could only think of returning to Pathwe to achieve this, but as success begins to crown his efforts in Rangoon he now feels the beginnings of a sense of achievement. In his refugee situation there was no sense of shame for his reduction - the events contributing to his downfall were beyond his control, and he had lived "as a refugee should" in which his abilities and obligations were balanced. This resulted in an attitude of cheerful patience understandable in terms of the KARMA concept. 511 181 558

The two standards, in Pathwe and camp, represent balanced levels ranging from the "average" Burmese villages situation to close to the minimum. Higher standards than those of Pathwe are seen in the administrative class of Rangoon and other major towns where western influences are strong (car, western furniture and household utensils, westernized house and clothing, etc.). Lower standards may be 511 565 [177]

29: Slater M-4 (no date) 1951 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

and self-control — but not yet!"[21] The average Burman has not renounced the world, he has not accepted the monastic discipline; and he knows it. Therefore he also knows that he cannot expect to share the greater understanding of those who *have* renounced the world.

Theoretically, maybe, even a layman may attain enlightenment.[22] But a wise instructor has likened the situation of the layman, exposed to the temptations of the world, to that of the traveller who was confronted by a tiger; the distractions and assaults of the world are tigerish.[23] The man who is in earnest will flee them. Even the monk, it is true, is not immune from these assaults. But the monk has a better chance. It is, then, the common view that if you really mean business, really mean to expedite progress towards Nibbāna, the obvious, sensible course is to join the Order. Those who have done so, those especially who have made some progress in the monastic life, the learned bhikkus, pursuing the hard disciplines of meditation, such may discern the distant shore of Nibbāna, such may hope to reach that shore, earlier than later: but not the householder, the man occupied by field or plough, wife or child. 'Undoubtedly every orthodox Buddhist hopes to obtain Nibbāna one day; but the monastic life is generally considered an essential condition for entry on the path to Nibbāna.'[24] It is only when one has followed this path some way that one can expect to know whither the path leads — if then. For the layman it is necessarily a distant prospect and a vague, mysterious concept. He is not worthy. He has not entered on the path which leads to 'the state of him who is worthy.' Therefore the layman is not presumptuous. This is a subject to be left to the learned bhikkus, partly because they are learned, partly because they are bhikkus. The two recognitions are associated, recognition of the expert, recognition of the better man, for the Burman knows that the monastic discipline is a mental discipline, enjoining study and meditation, but he also knows that the necessary, prior condition is moral.

He knows, too, that the learned bhikkus themselves are hesitant on this subject. Not even they, notwithstanding their qualifications, can pretend to full knowledge. To them also, Nibbāna is ultimately a mystery.

The *very* learned bhikkus perhaps, the most devoted, can just discern

[21] St Augustine, *Confessions* VIII. 7.

[22] *A. III*, 451 mentions twenty one laymen-Arahats; cf. Rhys Davids, *Dialogues of the Buddha*, Part I, p. 63, footnote.

[23] Bigandet, "The Seven Ways to Neibban," *op. cit.* Vol. 2, p. 236.

[24] de la Vallée Poussin, *Nirvana*, chap. I, p. 3: "Sans doute tout bouddhiste orthodoxe espère obtenir un jour le Nirvana; mais la vie monastique est généralement considérée une condition essentielle de l'entrée dans le chemin du Nirvana."